



# REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWO YEARS M. ED PROGRAMME: ARE WE FAILING YET AGAIN!

Dr Shalini Yadava

Assistant Professor, University School of Education, GGSIP University, New Delhi, India.

## ABSTRACT

This paper is an outcome of reflecting and brainstorming on the emergent need to bridge the gap between policy and practice on ground zero i.e the curriculum on one hand and the implementation and transaction of the curriculum in the teacher education departments/colleges offering the M.Ed programme on the other hand. The reflection is based on the professional experiences of the author as a critical pedagogue and further includes the views of some experienced peers engaged in teaching the M.Ed programme in teacher education institutions across the country. The paper was given shape based on focus group discussions with a number of teacher educators and student-teachers based in departments of education in universities in Delhi. There is no doubt that the one year M.Ed programme was not adequate to hone the professional skills of M.Ed students as future teachers, teacher educators, policy analysts, curriculum planners, content developers, researchers etc. But the disturbing aspect which needs to be put across is that the implementation of the two year M.Ed course too is mechanical, dehumanizing, structured with no flexibility and far from any emphasis on the development of curiosity, creativity, scientific temperament, empathy, care, democratic citizenship which are critical aspects to the evolution of a humane and competent teacher educator to begin with. Well, if it was so simplistic then an increase in duration and a model curriculum were enough. It is high time we accept that the stark reality on the ground which is right opposite is staring back at us, it is high time we acknowledge it and take measures to put the house in order. This paper is an attempt to present a critique of the implementation and transaction of the two year M.Ed programme on ground.

## INTRODUCTION:

We are all aware that any curriculum is based on a framework provided by the statutory body which puts forth the vision and expectations to be translated as objectives and of course most importantly in transaction. A testimony to the failure of the same on ground is listening to the discourse of teacher-educators and student-teachers repeatedly, asking each other of the need and rationale of making M.Ed into a two year course. Many are convinced that the M.Ed course of one year was sufficient and that we criminally waste two years doing nothing but engaging in repetition of the same old concepts or engaging in an eye wash in the name of internship. It is about time that it is realized that a mere increase in the duration of the course and changing the inputs in curricular areas does not achieve the aims and objectives we set out with, as envisaged by the policy planners and curriculum developers in the model curriculum. But when you see that curriculum being implemented in terms of the resources provided to the educator or the transactional strategies employed by the teacher educators in the classrooms and laboratories, the picture except in few classrooms is grim. The point is that if on one hand there is no facilitation for those who are intrinsically motivated to teach using the constructivist approach and on the other hand there are a number of those who are neither ready to teach nor to motivate students, the teacher education landscape is rather disillusioning to speak of. The status quo suits the majority as allocating high marks without any engagement in teaching-learning is easy (therefore one year is considered enough). This in turn aids the teacher-educators in getting a good feedback in the faculty feedback system as the students (not understanding the nefarious designs of their 'gurus' are happy with their marks as no efforts are needed on their part not even in attending the mandatory 75% of classes as by now they know that the quality of the discourse they are subjected to in the classrooms is something they can do without for good). They have been conditioned over years to believe and accept, that this is all that matters. Attendance and Punctuality to begin with are lost naturally in this onslaught of unethical practices by the majority. Therefore evaluation without reading a single word in the answer scripts plagues the assessment system (moderation too is an eye wash). And by the way we need to remember that if this is what we are subjecting future teachers and teacher educators to then it is further necessary to take stock, as, if this is the take away then, they may learn and further the damage over the next few decades in similar engagements in the name of teaching. In this background let us now revisit the expectations the model two year M.Ed curriculum puts forth before us.

## Implementation and Transactional Modalities of the M.Ed Curriculum in Teacher Education Departments: Some Observations

The curriculum planners are aware but many (a large number) in teacher education prefer to live in a fool's paradise thinking this is all what it takes to turn the tide in teacher education i.e. Having a curriculum with the stipulated inputs as per the guidelines of the statutory body and increase in duration of the course. The sad part is what the students were bearing in the name of post graduation in Education for one year, now they are going through the same for two years (ground zero is a dark reality). The observations from ground give us important indicators to ponder upon such that we do not fail our students yet again:

- **No Stringent Process Followed in Selection of Candidates in Teacher Education Courses:** Universities in India (a number of them

are engaging in choosing the prospective candidates for a Pre Service Teacher Education course both at B.Ed and M.Ed stage of entry on the basis of a multiple choice test only, followed by allocation of candidates to respective colleges through online counseling. In turn the claim is that the system is fair and transparent. Well two critical concerns and challenges emerge from this system of choosing the prospective candidates who shall be and large aim either to be teachers or teacher educators. First concern is that these universities are not examining the written expression of these candidates on critical issues surrounding general knowledge and education. Secondly we are not looking at a very important dimension of communication while making a choice to select a prospective student-teacher which is a well documented quality of a teacher/teacher educator. No interviewing as a part of the entry into a pre service teacher education course and no subjective type critical questions often make it very easy for candidates with actually very poor communication skills or no teaching aptitude to make it to the course with ease but the struggle starts thereafter. The ones who have got the admission are the ones who are baffled at the expectation or the outcomes expected out of them as teachers or teacher educators and so are the teacher educators who themselves are ill trained or hardly trained in critical pedagogy thus making it a no win situation. The teacher trainees hardly learn anything pertaining to what is expected of them as teachers or teacher educators as the ones who are teaching are also a product of the same poor quality (in terms of transaction and implementation both) pre-service teacher education course in terms of quality. So the vicious cycle continues. The worse is still not over. Now since these degree holding qualified teachers and teacher educators believe that they have been prepared for employment thus this leads to the start of another spiral. Since they were not made to learn they remained clueless about the expectations of the world of work and therefore they either get no jobs or have no choice but to settle for the commercial private teaching shops which exploit their employees day in day out blaming either their communication skills or skill sets in general. But the question is: Are they really to blame? Why is the system that made them false promise that they would be gainfully employed post their courses not accountable? (on account of not making the right choice of candidates to pursue the course). These are uncomfortable questions which the bodies that clamour for fixing accountability of only teachers and teacher educators need to answer. But will they? Where is the will to effect change in letter and spirit? Rest assured ICT is not the panacea for fixing all ills that plague teacher education! Acceptance of real challenges and concerns on ground may help us redeem ourselves with respect to the crisis in the present state of affairs in teacher education.

- **Lack of Academic Rigour in the Teacher Education Course Transaction:** The teacher educators (not all but a good number) are hardly aware (neither they feel the need to upgrade) of the process skills required to engage in a meaningful and purposeful discourse. They are merely repeating their lectures (if at all they go for teaching) that too not as per the syllabus guidelines but as per what they know. It is high time to think on reflecting on having the Indian Education Service back for

recruitment, needless to add that this service was put in place after putting the necessary safeguards in place such that merit prevails. Now if this is the status and standard of recruitment of teacher educators, it is but obvious that the quality of curriculum transaction is such that except for a few cases the entire curriculum becomes the null curriculum (as the teacher intentionally decides not to cover it or cover it without any engagement with the learners on issues and concerns in education dialogically and critically both) sadly.

- **Poor Implementation of the Internship Component:** Does the Internship component in M.Ed that is executed in teacher education institutions and in schools across semesters serve the purpose for which it was designed? This is a question that is easily answered if you engage in experience sharing with the student –teachers who undertake this. Often they are either used as multi tasking staff taking care of the load of the regular teachers or just futilely marking their attendance and coming back sitting in the institutional libraries completing the assigned file work. The engagement in actual teaching –learning with respect to lesson delivery, development of cost effective teaching aids, undertaking diagnostic evaluation of students, participating in remedial teaching, organizing co-curricular activities for students, learning the art of setting question papers that cover different domains of cognition etc. is hardly seen on ground. Unless the student-teachers are genuinely immersed in this field experience continuously for months (block internship not intermittent model of internship) to understand the working of these institutions in order to know the demands they exert in terms of time, energy and efforts the whole exercise is pointless. This is definitely a weak link in terms of implementation of the two year M.Ed programme.

from Curriculum Framework TwoYear M.Ed Programme ,Developed and Published by NCTE, Page 19)

Looking at the implementation of the two year M.Ed programme closely one finds hardly any emphasis on the accomplishment of the above objectives in terms of the expected course outcomes. The internship programme offered at present does not give the teachers any exposure with respect to looking at policy implementation on ground ,looking at the modalities of evaluation of pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes or critically examining the role and responsibilities of statutory bodies in upgrading the quality of teacher education. These needed to be included as a part of Internship such that the teachers gets a holistic perspective of working of schools and teacher education institutions

#### CONCLUSION:

The possibility of achieving the expected course outcomes out of the M.Ed programme can only be thought of if the needed academic rigor is infused with respect to quality of curriculum transaction and implementation. Secondly it is important to take the internship component seriously such that the course outcomes are achieved in tune with the course objectives. Unless these two primary concerns are taken care of it will just be a case of extending the one year duration of the M.Ed programme to two years without any tangible results.

#### REFERENCES:

- I. Curriculum Framework for the Two Year M.Ed Programme (2014), National Council of Teacher Education.
- II. National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009), National Council of Teacher Education.

#### Suggestions for the Improvement of the Implementation of the Two Year M.Ed Programme:

- **Change in the Selection Criteria:** The first change that is needed to infuse fresh rigor is to have a sound policy of selection of candidates to the M.Ed course .The prospective candidates need to be tested not through objective type multiple choice test items but subjective type tests, that support evaluation of expression, linguistic proficiency, critical thinking and teaching aptitude which are important parameters for selection of future teachers and teacher educators. This should be followed by an interview which may not necessarily carry much weightage but at least it gives a clear idea with respect to the fluency in language and pedagogical content knowledge.
- **Improvement in Quality of Curriculum Transaction:** The quality of curriculum transaction with respect to both theory and practical need drastic improvement. The lectures delivered need to be interesting and relevant ,relating all aspects with life to make them meaningful for students.It is also important to lay a large amount of emphasis on development of Life skills of students through workshops that entail hands on experience such as Theatre Activities etc. It is also important that all the concepts that are application based are not just taught as theoretical concepts but their relevance is demonstrated practically for example concepts of pedagogical analysis, concept mapping budgeting etc. Adequate time needs to be given to develop the research skills of the future teachers and teacher-educators such that in future they are able to engage in socially relevant research projects on one hand and action research in their immediate work environment to find solutions to problems on the other hand .
- **Changes needed in Implementation of the Internship Component of M.Ed:** For instituting any changes in the implementation of the M.Ed programme it is important to revisit the vision behind Teacher Education Programme which includes the essential component of internship in M.Ed. According to the Curriculum Framework for the Two Year M.Ed Programme developed by NCTE the broad key objectives of the Teacher Education component are:
  - “Be acquainted with the content, and organisation of pre-service teacher education curriculum, infrastructure and resources needed, and the issues and problems related to teacher preparation
  - Examine the existing pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes from the view point of policy and its relevance to the demands of present day school realities.
  - Involve in various activities and processes of a teacher education institution, in order to gain an insight in to the multiple roles of a teacher educator and understand the organisational culture.
  - Develop competence in organisation and evaluation of various components of a pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes
  - Design in-service teacher professional development program/activities based on the needs of teachers
  - Critically examine the role and contribution of various agencies and regulating bodies in enhancing the quality of teacher education.” (Quoted